

To: binetti, victoria[binetti.victoria@epa.gov]
Cc: Arguto, William[Arguto.William@epa.gov]
From: Werner, Lora
Sent: Fri 3/21/2014 12:34:14 PM
Subject: Re: Resignation

I am personally just sooooo sad. Lora

This one has even more detail -

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/military/chief-of-agency-studying-camp-lejeune-health-effects-resigns/2170728>

From: binetti, victoria
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2014 6:57:40 AM
To: Werner, Lora
Cc: Arguto, William
Subject: Resignation

**This is in Government Executive this morning. I'm so sorry!--
Vicky**

Chief Resigns After Clash With Marines Over Camp Lejeune Problems



A manhole cover sits at the site of the Hadnot Point Well No. 602 at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in 2013 Allen Breed/AP

The head of a federal agency that investigates health problems linked to toxic-waste sites has stepped down after a clash with former Marines who believe their families were harmed by poisoned drinking water at Camp Lejeune.

Tanja Popovic's sudden resignation followed a tumultuous seven weeks as acting director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, a division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, during which she assured West Virginia residents that their water was safe to drink after a toxic chemical spill in January, questioned the need for a study of cancers that may be linked to Camp Lejeune's tainted water, and sent scolding emails to aides of lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

Popovic also had some tense email exchanges with the leader of a group advocating for victims of Camp Lejeune's contamination, former Marine Master Sgt. Jerry Ensminger, in which she accused Ensminger and his colleagues of sending messages that contained "disrespectful, condescending, and even offensive content."

"I take attacks on my professional and personal integrity very seriously," Popovic wrote to Ensminger on March 12, "and I am profoundly saddened to see that you will stop at nothing."

The friction culminated in a meeting on Capitol Hill last week between staff of lawmakers concerned about Popovic's handling of Camp Lejeune issues and congressional liaisons for Popovic's division, the CDC, and the Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees both agencies. That meeting included aides to the two senators from North Carolina, where Camp Lejeune is located, as well as Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., author of the federal law that established the agency Popovic ran.

The next business day, Popovic's resignation was announced in an email to top managers at the CDC, headquartered in Atlanta.

A spokeswoman for the CDC, Bernadette Burden, said she could only confirm that Popovic's tenure as acting director of the agency began on Jan. 26 and ended Monday. "It's a personnel matter," Burden said, so no information about the resignation would be discussed.

Reached at her home in Stone Mountain, Ga., the scientist who worked for the federal government for 25 years declined to comment. "I would not like to make any comments, thank you," Popovic said before hanging up.

Widespread dumping of military waste at Camp Lejeune over at least four decades caused drinking-water supplies at the sprawling base on the Atlantic Coast to be contaminated with toxic chemicals from the 1950s until 1985, when 10 tainted wells were finally shut down. As many as a million Marines and family members, as well as civilian employees at the base, could have been exposed to the polluted water, and many of them believe illnesses and deaths were caused by it.

Congress passed a law in 2012 providing health care for Marines and family members who have specific illnesses that can be linked to the contamination, but the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry is still conducting studies of the pollution's health effects.

One of the studies sought by victims of the contamination would attempt to determine incidences of cancer among former residents of Camp Lejeune. But last month Popovic told lawmakers in a meeting called to get an update on the study that the agency had neither the authority nor expertise to conduct a cancer-incidence study.

The meeting prompted Dingell and the two senators from North Carolina, Democrat Kay Hagan and Republican Richard Burr, to write HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius on March 12 urging that the study be done and also asking that Popovic's agency work on better relations with victims of the Camp Lejeune contamination.

"For reasons we cannot yet discern, the desire for open communication seems to have waned within ATSDR in recent months," Dingell, Hagan, and Burr wrote to Sebelius.

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